

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2016

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing, and
Urban Development
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing, and
Urban Development
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price,

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2017 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, we ask that you include report language highlighting the need to fairly balance priorities as our nation works to end homelessness.

Since *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* was launched, homelessness among certain populations of Americans has been significantly reduced. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the umbrella organization charged with advancing Federal collaboration and coordination among a number of Federal agencies, has had success in getting the chronically homeless and homeless veterans off the streets, as well as assisting those on the verge of losing their homes.

According to the most recent data available, nearly half of those currently living without permanent shelter are families. As we continue the important work of sheltering veterans, the chronically homeless, and assisting those with mental health or substance abuse illnesses, it is critical that we do not lose sight of the sizable number of American families also coping with homelessness, and empower local communities to address the needs of their homeless populations. Therefore, we request the Committee include the following language in its Fiscal Year 2017 report:

The Committee recognizes that local communities are best able to determine the housing and service needs of different local homeless populations, including youth, families, veterans, persons with disabilities, and others, and may wish to do more to address the needs of these populations. Therefore, the Committee strongly encourages HUD to consider communities' pressing local priorities and assessments of need, balanced with the importance of moving forward on the nationwide plan to end homelessness anticipated in the HEARTH Act.

In addition, we recognize the importance of utilizing Trauma-Informed Care and other services in assisting the homeless population. Trauma-Informed Care specifically – a treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of trauma while providing housing services – has proven to be a valuable approach for combating homelessness. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health, between 55 percent and 99 percent of women in substance use treatment, as well as 85 percent to 95 percent of women in the public mental health system, report a history of trauma. In many communities, approaching homelessness services through this lens has had significant beneficial impacts. Therefore, we also request the Committee include the following language in its Fiscal Year 2017 report:

The Committee recognizes the value of trauma-informed care and housing services and supports expanding the availability of these services to families, families with children, and individuals that are currently or on the verge of being homeless. Therefore, the Committee directs the Interagency Council on Homelessness to report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations within 180 days of enactment on what steps can be taken to improve access to services across all federal, state, and local homeless services, outreach, and prevention programs.

We deeply appreciate your past support for homelessness services and respectfully encourage you to ensure that the above language is included in the Subcommittee's Report.

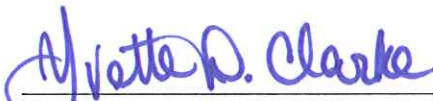
Sincerely,



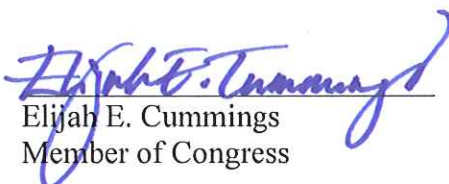
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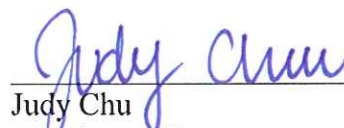
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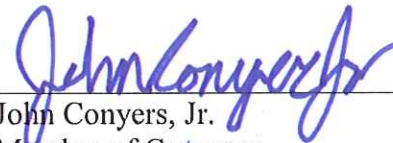
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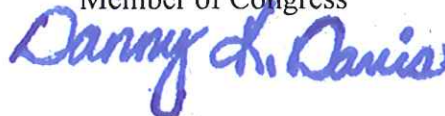
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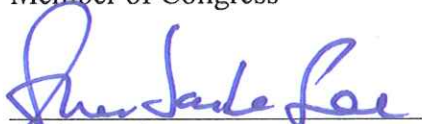
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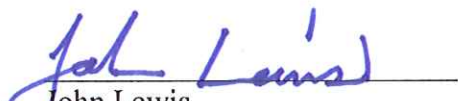
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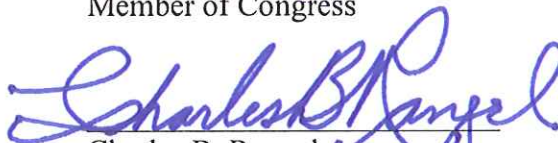

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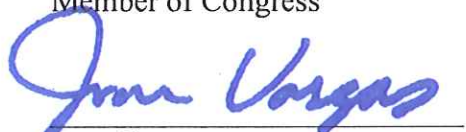

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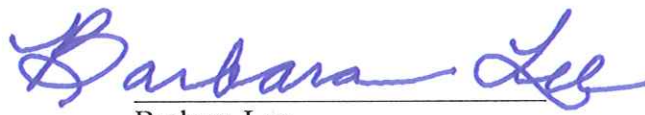

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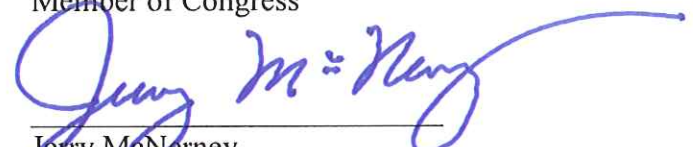

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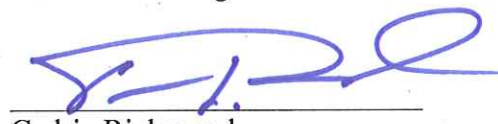

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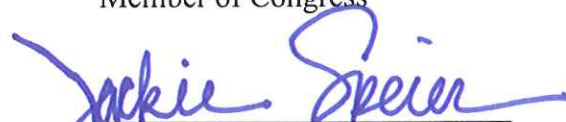

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